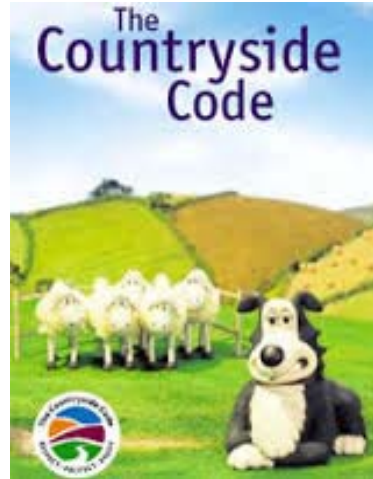


The Countryside Code

The Countryside Code applies to all parts of the countryside. Most of it is just good common sense designed to help us all to respect, protect and enjoy our countryside.



The code, which applies in England and Wales, makes it clear what the responsibilities are for both the public and the people who manage the land.

The Countryside Code was started in the 1950s as the Country Code. It was updated in 2012.

Code for the public includes -

- 1. Respect other people**
- 2. Protect the natural environment**
- 3. Enjoy the outdoors**
- 4. Respect other people - consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors**
 - Respect the needs of local people and visitors – for example, don't block gateways, driveways or other paths with your vehicle.
 - When riding a bike or driving a vehicle, slow down or stop for horses, walkers and farm animals and give them plenty of room. By law, cyclists must give way to walkers and horse riders on bridleways.
 - Co-operate with people at work in the countryside. For example, keep out of the way when farm animals are being gathered or moved and follow directions from the farmer.
 - Busy traffic on small country roads can be unpleasant and dangerous to local people, visitors and wildlife - so slow down and where possible, leave your

vehicle at home, consider sharing lifts and use alternatives such as public transport or cycling.

Leave gates and property as you find them and follow paths unless wider access is available

- A farmer will normally close gates to keep farm animals in, but may sometimes leave them open so the animals can reach food and water. Leave gates as you find them or follow instructions on signs. When in a group, make sure the last person knows how to leave the gates.
- Follow paths unless wider access is available, such as on open country or registered common land (known as 'Open Access' land).
- If you think a sign is illegal or misleading such as a 'Private - No Entry' sign on a public path, contact the local authority.
- Leave machinery and farm animals alone – don't interfere with animals even if you think they're in distress. Try to alert the farmer instead.
- Use gates, stiles or gaps in field boundaries if you can – climbing over walls, hedges and fences can damage them and increase the risk of farm animals escaping.
- Our heritage matters to all of us – be careful not to disturb ruins and historic sites.

Protect the natural environment - leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home

- Protecting the natural environment means taking special care not to damage, destroy or remove features such as rocks, plants and trees. They provide homes and food for wildlife, and add to everybody's enjoyment of the countryside.
- Litter and leftover food doesn't just spoil the beauty of the countryside, it can be dangerous to wildlife and farm animals – so take your litter home with you. Dropping litter and dumping rubbish are criminal offences.
- Fires can be as devastating to wildlife and habitats as they are to people and property – so be careful with naked flames and cigarettes at any time of the year. Sometimes, controlled fires are used to manage vegetation, particularly on heaths and moors between 1st October and 15th April, but if a fire appears to be unattended then report it by calling 999.

Keep dogs under effective control





- When you take your dog into the countryside, always ensure it does not disturb wildlife, farm animals, horses or other people by keeping it under effective control. This means that you:
 - keep your dog on a lead or
 - keep it in sight at all times, be aware of what it's doing and be confident it will return to you promptly on command
 - ensure it does not stray off the path or area where you have a right of access
- Special dog rules may apply in particular situations, so always look out for local signs – for example:
 - Dogs may be banned from certain areas that people use (such as beaches), or there may be restrictions, byelaws or control orders limiting where they can go.
 - The access rights that normally apply to open country and registered common land require dogs to be kept on a short lead between 1 March and 31 July, to help protect ground-nesting birds, and all year round near farm animals.
 - On the coast, there may also be some local restrictions to require dogs to be kept on a short lead during the bird breeding season, and to prevent disturbance to flocks of resting and feeding birds during other times of year.
- It's always good practice (and a legal requirement on 'Open Access' land) to keep your dog on a lead around farm animals and horses for your own safety and for the welfare of the animals. A farmer may shoot a dog which is attacking or chasing farm animals without being liable to compensate the dog's owner.
- However, if cattle or horses chase you and your dog, it is safer to let your dog off the lead – don't risk getting hurt by trying to protect it. Your dog will be much safer if you let it run away from a farm animal in these circumstances and so will you.
- Everyone knows how unpleasant dog mess is and it can cause infections, so always clean up after your dog and get rid of the mess responsibly – 'bag it and bin it'. Make sure your dog is wormed regularly to protect it, other animals and people.

Enjoy the outdoors - plan ahead and be prepared

- You'll get more from your visit if you refer to up-to-date maps or guidebooks and websites before you go. Check out countryside visitors or contact local information centres or libraries for a list of outdoor recreation groups offering advice on specialist activities.
- You're responsible for your own safety and for others in your care – especially children - so be prepared for natural hazards, changes in weather and other events. Wild animals, farm animals and horses can behave unpredictably if you get too close, especially if they're with their young - so give them plenty of space.
- Check weather forecasts before you leave. Conditions can change rapidly especially on mountains and along the coast, so don't be afraid to turn back. When visiting the coast check for tide times. Don't risk getting cut off by rising tides and take care on slippery rocks and sea-weed.
- Part of the appeal of the countryside is that you can get away from it all. You may not see anyone for hours, and there are many places without clear mobile phone signals, so let someone else know where you're going and when you expect to return.

Follow advice and local signs

England has about 190,000 km (118,000 miles) of public rights of way, providing many opportunities to enjoy the natural environment. Get to know the signs and symbols used in the countryside to show paths and open countryside.

Symbol	Type of access	Description
	Footpath	Open to walkers only, way marked with a yellow arrow
	Bridleway	Open to walkers, horse-riders and cyclists, way marked with a blue arrow
	Restricted byway	Open to walkers, cyclists, horse-riders and horse-drawn vehicles, way marked with a plum coloured arrow
	Byway open to all traffic (BOAT)	Open to walkers, cyclists, horse-riders, horse-drawn vehicles and motor vehicles, way marked with a red arrow



National Trail

Identifies 15 long distance routes in England and Wales. All are open for walking and some trails are also suitable for cyclists, horse-riders and people with limited mobility.



Open Access land

865,000 hectares of mountain, moorland, heathland, down land and registered common land (mapped under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) are available to people to walk, run, explore, climb and watch wildlife, without having to stay on paths. Similar rights will be extended in stages on coastal land (identified under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009).



Negative access symbol

May be used to mark the end of area-wide access.

The Countryside Code Quiz for KS2

Teachers may like to use this quiz at the end of their work on the Countryside Code to assess the pupils' understanding, but it is primarily intended as a fun, rounding-up activity. The quiz is designed for small groups of children with some time being allowed for discussion of answers.

Quiz Questions

- 1) Give two reasons why it is wrong to drop litter. (2 points)
- 2) What should you do if you if you come across a farm animal in distress? (1 point)
- 3) What should you check before you leave for an outing in the countryside? (1 point)
- 4) Why should you use gates and stiles in the countryside and not climb over walls, hedges and fences? (2 points)
- 5) How could you support the rural economy? (1 point)
- 6) What should you do if a farm animal chases you and your dog? (1 point)
- 7) Why should you never remove features of the countryside such as rocks, plants and trees? (1 point)
- 8) What should you remember to do if walking through a field where crops are growing? (1 point)
- 9) When riding a bike in the countryside, who must you slow down for? (3 points)
- 10) Draw 5 symbols from the Countryside Code. What do they mean? (5 points plus 1 bonus point)
- 11) Who should you contact if you come across a sign that you think is illegal or misleading? (1 point)
- 12) What must you remember to do if you go through a gate that was closed when you found it? (1 point)
- 13) Why might a farmer sometimes leave a gate open? (1 point)
- 14) What should you do if you are out walking between October and early April and you notice a fire? (1 point)
- 15) What can a farmer do to a dog that is worrying their farm animals? (1 point)
- 16) What should you do with your dog's mess? (2 points)
- 17) Why should you keep your distance from wild animals or farm animals? (1 point)

18) What are the 5 main headings of the Countryside Code? (5 points plus 2 bonus points)

Total = 34 points

Answers

1. 2 points for any two of these

Litter spoils the beauty of the countryside.

Litter can be dangerous to wildlife and animals.

Litter can spread disease.

2. Try to alert the farmer. 1 point

3. Check the weather forecast. 1 point

4. If you climb over walls, hedges and fences you might damage them (1 point) and this would increase the risk of animals escaping. (1 point)

5. Buy your supplies from local shops (You should accept sensible suggestions which are not in the Countryside Code e.g. buy souvenirs from the shop, have a drink at a local café). 1 point

6. Let your dog off the lead. 1 point

7. They provide homes and food for wildlife or they add to everybody's enjoyment of the countryside. 1 point

8. Follow the paths where possible. 1 point

9. A) horses B) walkers C) livestock 3 points

10. A) Footpath waymark B) Bridleway waymark

C) Byway waymark D) National Trails

E) Open Access

5 points (plus 1 bonus point for any group that gets 5 signs correct)

11. The Local Authority 1 point

12. Close it behind you. 1 point

13. So the farmer's livestock can get to food and water. 1 point

14. Check that the fire is not supervised before you call 999. 1 point

15. A farmer can destroy the dog. 1 point

16. Clean it up (1 point) and get rid of it sensibly (1 point).

17. Because wild animals and farm animals can behave unpredictably if you get too close to them. 1 point

18. A) Be safe – plan ahead and follow any signs

B) Leave gates and property as you find them

C) Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home

D) Keep dogs under close control

E) Consider other people

5 points (give 2 bonus points for any group that gets all 5 rules word perfect!)

Total Possible Score 34 points